

AMENDMENTS TO THE DRAWINGS

A replacement sheet for Figures 1 and 2 is provided herewith. Figure 2 has been amended to include reference characters 16, 17, and 18 to show components of the negative electrode 11.

Attachment: Replacement Sheet

REMARKS

The Examiner objected to Figure 1 for failing to include reference characters 16 (strip), 17 (layer of active material), and 18 (lateral band without active material). Applicants submit herewith corrected drawings which include these reference numerals.

Claims 1-24 are all the claims pending in the application. Claims 1, 3-8, 12, and 13 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by EP 1102337 (“Ura”). Claims 1, 4, 8, and 12 were also rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 3,761,314 (“Cailley”). Claims 2 and 9-11 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103 as being unpatentable over Ura as applied to claims 1, 3-8, 12, and 13 and Cailley as applied to claims 1, 4, 8, and 12. Applicants respectfully traverse these rejections.

The Examiner mistakenly alleges that Ura discloses folding lateral bands of strips of the same polarity in a direction approximately perpendicular to their initial direction, at a height at least equal to the distance separating adjacent strips. As support, the Examiner cites Figure 1 and paragraph [0025] of Ura. However, Figure 1 clearly shows that adjacent strips do not overlap after folding, which would have to occur if the strips were in fact folded approximately perpendicular at a height at least equal to the separation distance. Figure 1 of Ura discloses lateral bands folded at a height which is not at least equal to the distance separating them from the adjacent strips of the same polarity. Spaces are present between two folded lateral bands. Further, Ura does not disclose lateral bands folded in a concertina manner. Ura discloses lateral bands folded in a substantially perpendicular direction.

In paragraph [0025] or anywhere else, Ura neither shows nor suggests a relationship between the folding height and the separation distance between strips. For at least these reasons, claim 1 is patentable over Ura. Dependent claims are patentable for at least the same reasons.

Regarding Cailley, claim 1 has been amended to include the features of claim 12. Specifically, claim 1 recites that the “lateral bands are folded in a concertina manner.”

The Examiner mistakenly interpreted the concertina folding in claim 12 to mean that “the lateral bands are folded approximately perpendicular to the initial direction of the strips.” *Office Action*, page 4. With that interpretation, claim 12 would be superfluous of original claim 1 because the perpendicular fold is already recited. Thus, the Examiner’s interpretation is improper. Concertina folding is associated with the zigzag folds of an accordion. Such a folding arrangement may be accomplished by repeated flattening of the bands causing the bands to buckle and fold over as shown in Figure 4 of the present application.

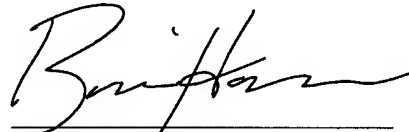
Cailley discloses bending over slotted portions of the bands to make a planar surface resembling fish scales, as shown in Figure 3. Only the slotted portions are bent over, and not in a concertina manner. For at least these reasons, claim 1 is patentable over Cailley. Dependent claims are patentable for at least the same reasons.

In short, the problem of the invention is to avoid any risk of the weld projecting inside the bundle (p.7 l.25). The solution of the invention is to fold the lateral bands of the strips of the same polarity in a sort of “concertina” in order to form a continuous plane base approximately perpendicular to the initial direction of the strips. The base thus formed constitutes a metal barrier allowing laser-welding of a plane connection. (page 9 l.7-26). The metal barrier prevents the weld from falling inside the electrochemical bundle. None of the cited documents teaches or suggests the solution of the invention. Indeed, the lateral bands of the strips in both Cailley and Ura are both merely folded perpendicularly to the direction of the electrochemical bundle and not in a zigzag manner.

In view of the above, reconsideration and allowance of this application are now believed to be in order, and such actions are hereby solicited. If any points remain in issue which the Examiner feels may be best resolved through a personal or telephone interview, the Examiner is kindly requested to contact the undersigned at the telephone number listed below.

The USPTO is directed and authorized to charge all required fees, except for the Issue Fee and the Publication Fee, to Deposit Account No. 19-4880. Please also credit any overpayments to said Deposit Account.

Respectfully submitted,



Brian W. Hannon
Registration No. 32,778

SUGHRUE MION, PLLC
Telephone: (202) 293-7060
Facsimile: (202) 293-7860

WASHINGTON OFFICE

23373

CUSTOMER NUMBER

Date: July 2, 2007